

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

national park service

For Immediate Release
December 16, 1998

John A. Dell'Osso
(415) 663-8522, ext. 226

Point Reyes National Seashore to Enhance Educational Opportunities for Bay Area Teachers

Point Reyes National Seashore recently received an education grant from Exxon Corporation to recruit Bay Area teachers to develop a sixth, seventh, and eighth grade science teacher's guide for visits to Point Reyes. Five teacher workshops will be held in 1999 to develop curriculum-based activities for the guide. The grant will pay for teacher release days for all participating teachers, and for partial or complete transportation grants for student field trips to the park in the 1999-2000 school year.

Teachers from thirteen Bay Area schools have already committed to assisting with the program. "It is exciting to work with such motivated and dedicated teachers," said Lynne Dominy, the park's education director. "Teachers from Tomales, Bolinas, West Marin, Lagunitas, Larkspur, Fairfax, Novato, San Rafael, Petaluma, Sebastopol, and even as far as the East Bay and Contra Costa County have decided to work with us. We are hoping that more teachers will show an interest so that all Bay Area school districts will be represented."

more

Point Reyes National Seashore Point Reyes Station, California 94956

“This project is a wonderful opportunity for our students and staff to utilize such a rich local resource,” said Steven Rosenthal, Shoreline School District Superintendent. “ We are very excited about this opportunity.”

On September 3, 1998 the Exxon Corporation announced a pledge of \$1.5 million to the P.A.R.K.S. program to enhance science and environmental education programs. Exxon’s grant, which will be distributed among 36 National Parks over a three-year period, will promote science literacy, provide opportunities for students and teachers to use National Parks as “hands-on” learning laboratories, and strengthen students’ understanding of National Park resources.

“National Parks offer tremendous opportunities for students to observe and study natural processes and resources. With very little effort, students can walk on the San Andreas fault, observe the migration of gray whales and northern elephant seals, and experience the tule elk rut merely by visiting Point Reyes National Seashore,” said Don Neubacher, Superintendent of Point Reyes National Seashore. “Point Reyes National Seashore will use this grant to encourage teachers to utilize the seashore as an extension of their classrooms. In partnership with area middle school teachers, we will be developing a sixth through eighth grade teachers guide that highlights the park resources which provide exceptional opportunities for students to understand science.”

The Parks as Resources for Knowledge in Science (P.A.R.K.S.) program was created to advance science education partnerships between National Parks, schools, and local communities. The structure of the P.A.R.K.S. program builds on NSTA’s “Building a Presence for Science,” which aims to improve science education and bring science teaching practices in line with the National Science Education Standards.

“It is imperative that we increase young people’s interest and understanding of practical science,” said Tony Atkiss, Exxon’s Vice President for Public Affairs. “The National Park Service, together with the National Park Foundation, has an outstanding tradition of developing and supporting innovative educational programs. Exxon’s contribution will help the NPF strengthen the quality and scope of science and environmental education efforts in communities throughout the country.”

Throughout the P.A.R.K.S. program three-year duration, Ohio State University will conduct ongoing assessments to ensure program effectiveness and to facilitate replications. Upon P.A.R.K.S.’ completion, lessons learned from the program will be published and made available to all 376 National Parks, as well as the education community.

“Exxon’s significant commitment to the National Park Foundation will create lasting and beneficial partnerships between communities, schools, and our National Parks,” said Jim Maddy, President of the National Park Foundation.

more

The National Park Foundation is the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service. Created by Congress in 1967, the Foundation raises support from corporations, foundations, and individuals to preserve and enhance America's National Parks. Over the past five years, NPF has raised more than \$21 million in direct support for the National Parks.

With more than 53,000 members nationwide, the National Science Teachers Association is America's largest organization committed to excellence and innovation in science teaching and learning. Through conventions, award-winning publications, journals and professional development opportunities, NSTA keeps science teachers current in teaching, science content, research, and available resources and technology.

The National Seashore encompasses over 71,000 acres of diverse landscape for educational and recreational pursuits. Visitation to the National Seashore now exceeds 2.6 million visitors each year. Over 32,000 acres of wilderness are protected from human development for current and future generations. For a wild place to exist so close to seven million person metropolitan area is a marvel in itself. Biological diversity flourishes within the Seashore with over 850 plant species found within the Park's boundary, about 17% of the California flora. Additionally, over 450 bird species have been recorded in the park, making Point Reyes the host to over 45% of the bird species found in North America!

This teacher's guide will be developed using the national and state science standards and will focus on natural processes that will be observed by students during their visit. While visiting Point Reyes, students will study concepts such as adaptation, migration, food webs, plate tectonics, oceanography, and environmental stewardship. This is an exciting opportunity for both teachers and students to experience the natural wonders of Point Reyes while studying science. If you are a Bay Area teacher that is interested in participating in this project, contact Lynne Dominy at (415) 663-8522 ext. 274. The park is also recruiting teachers or teaching interns that are interested in working on the assembly of the guide.

Please visit our expanded website at www.nps.gov/pore and visit the California Fedpage at fedpage.doi.nps for information on all Federal natural resource agencies in California.

###